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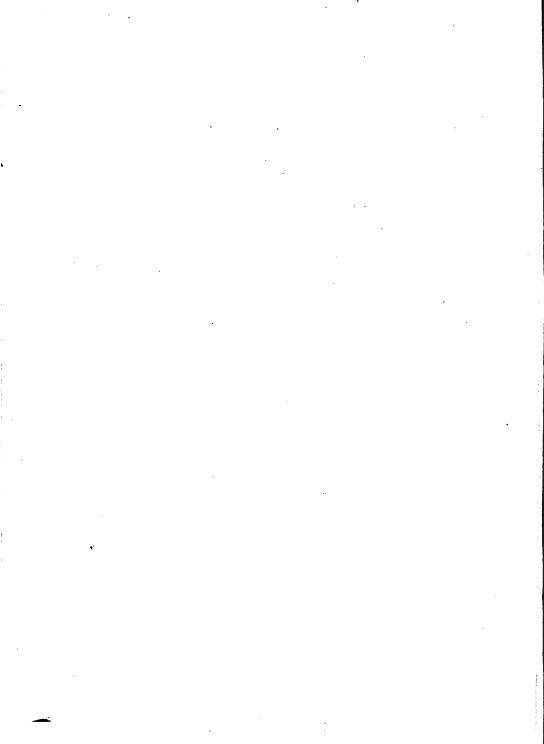
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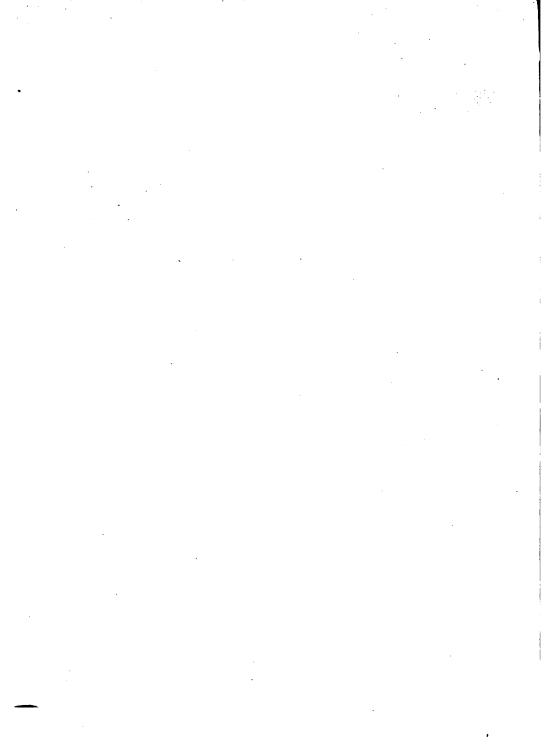
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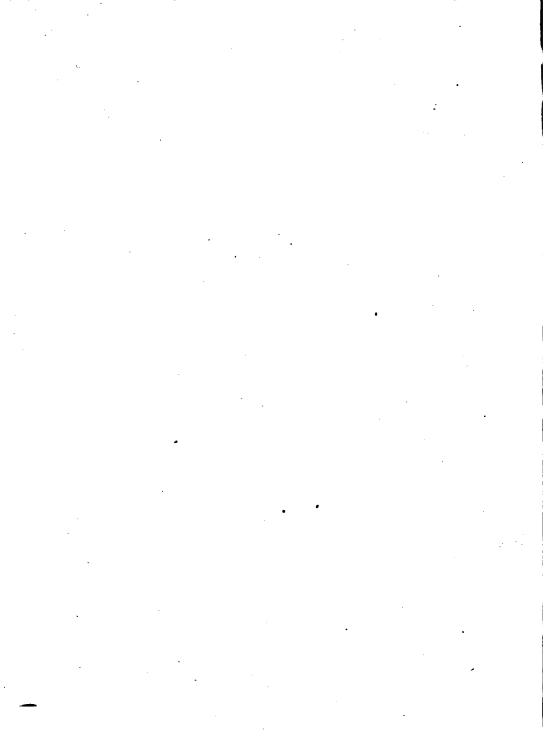
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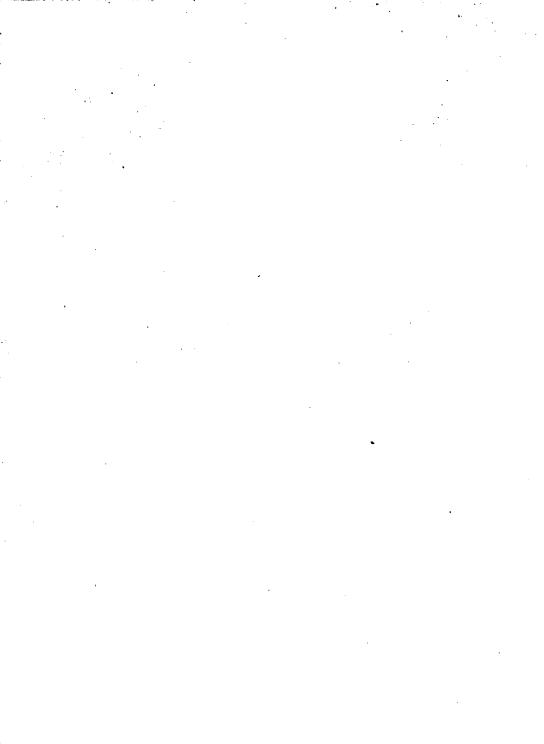






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PRESS OF THE HANSEN COMPANY SAN FRANCISCO



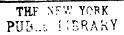


Library Windows

RETTA PARROTT

HARR WAGNER PUBLISHING CO.
SAN FRANCISCO
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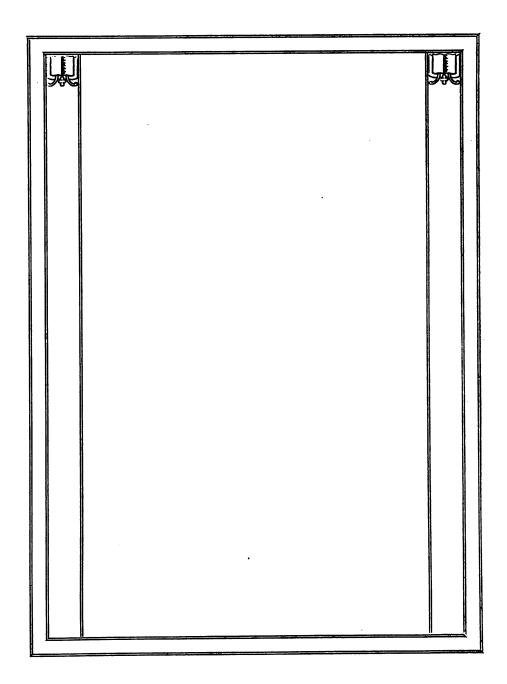
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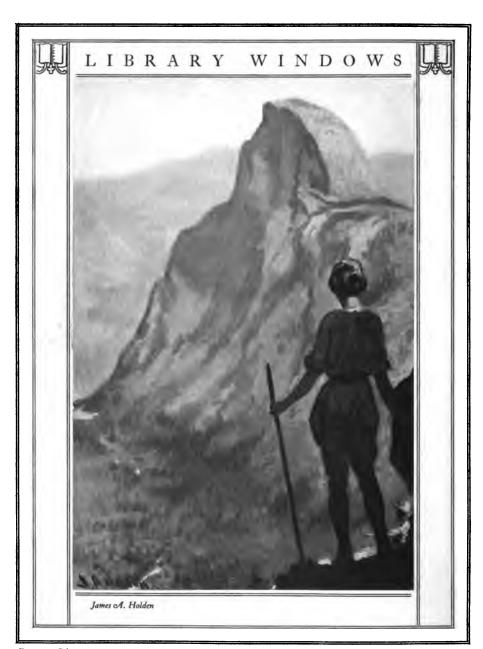
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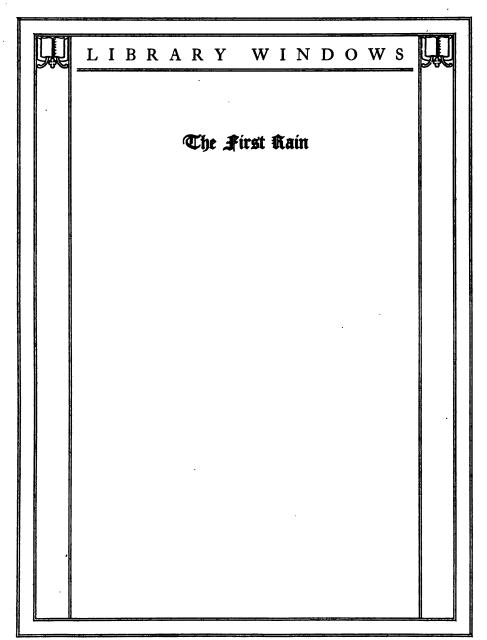


Poreword

ERE are twenty-six sonnets from the civic center of Sacramento, the heart of "The Heart of California." This allows one for each fortnight of the working year which began in the fall of nineteen-nineteen, the dates, however, not being distributed with perfect regularity. The sonnets show the principal changes of the seasons as observed through windows of the City Library from the viewpoint of the reference librarian, with such reflections as naturally arise out of the times and the surroundings. The dates appended are representative rather than absolute, although in most cases not far from the day described, nor from that upon which the sonnet took form. If this little work shall give to any one a tenth part of the pleasure and appreciation of common scenes which the composition of it in home hours has given the writer, its publication will be fully justified. - R. P.



Page Six







OW comes the first day of the year for me,
And heaven responds by sending the first rain:

Dust from the trees and cobwebs from the brain

Are washed away; the weeks of travel free O'er open road, and mountain trail, and sea.

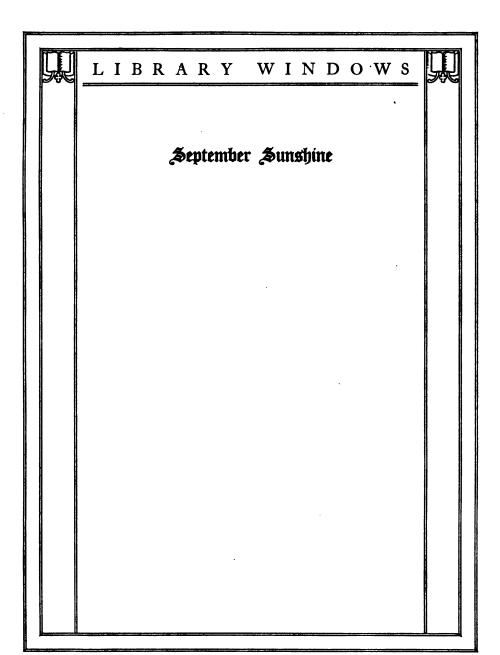
Have helped the mind and body to regain Their wonted vigor, and with might and main

Take up the routine of the year to be.
What matter that the sky is lowering,
Dark with the mottled gray of nimbus clouds,

Or that a robe of faded green enshrouds The elms, which wore so rich a dress in spring?

The Lord is mindful of impending dearth And sends an early rain to bless the earth.

September the First







HROUGHOUT the year there are three days and more
Of sunshine, for each one by cloud obscured;

The burning heat of summer is endured, Or else escaped on mountain, or the shore; But when September sun begins to pour Its mellow light through windows, reassured,

Home-stayers smile; and wanderers are lured

Back to the duties wearisome before.

And yet it is the radiant summer heat

Which puts the sugar in the grape and pear,

Colors the peach, and makes the orange
bear

Its early crop of luscious fruit, and sweet: So, for abundant sunshine, let us lift Praises to God for this most perfect gift.

September the Fifth

LIBRARY WINDOWS Sequoia and Spire





12 IEWED from remotest corner of the room
Through that southeastern window framed in green,

Is a symbolical and lovely scene

Made by the figures of two spires which loom

Into the sky; the tree seems to assume
The height of the cathedral spire, being seen

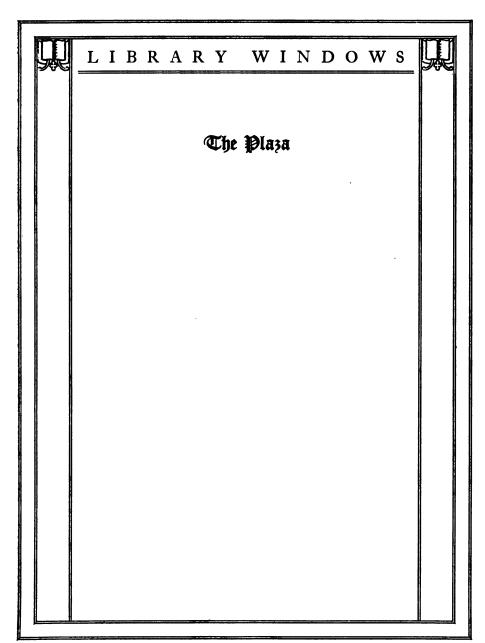
At closer range; but over both serene Rises the shining cross, dispersing gloom. The lifted cross will henceforth bring good cheer—

Oh, not a golden one, or such as might Be made from that red-hearted tree, whose height

Contests for ages, thousandth year on year,

To reach the altitude of that fair spire— 'Twill be the Christ as he is lifted higher!

October the Twelfth







LEAR breathing space close to the city's heart
Where children play on ever verdant grass

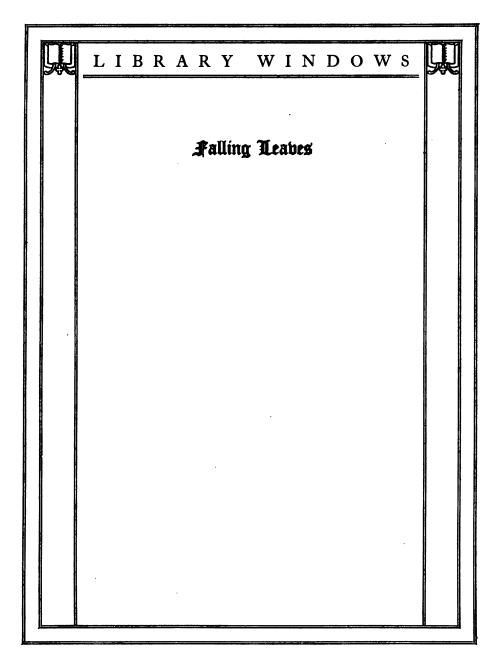
And old men rest; where hurrying people pass

On the diagonal 'twixt residence and mart Nor pause to read the weather; where the art

Of music has its hour, the folk en masse
Gathering to sing or listen; where no class
Predominates, but each may have a part:
This is the plaza. Here before the dawn
A year ago, an earnest crowd was drawn
To celebrate the first act of world peace,
In wistful hope that war might henceforth
cease.

Long may the plaza be the open place Where loyal citizens speak face to face!

November the Eleventh





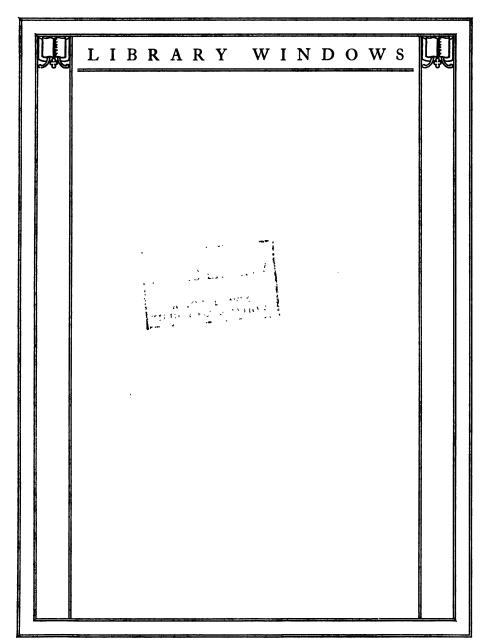


IS Indian Summer, and the yellow leaves
Scarce faltering, drop singly into view

Against the velvet trunks of elms, which through

The glowing eastern window one perceives;
Sunshine among the branches interweaves
Its soft translucent light of golden hue,
Making a mural Claude Lorrain might do,
Withlines and balance such as Low achieves:
Across the park a funeral cortège goes,
And in an hour a second one will pass,
Bearing two gentle, ripened friends;
Fallen, like autumn leaves upon the grass.
How delicately nature makes amends
For all that might seem harshness at life's
close.

November the Eighteenth









James A. Holden

LIBRARY WINDOWS A Vattle of the Clements



ONDER the barren elm trees writhe and lash,
Turn pale and gray through smoky gusts of rain,

While copious waters gurgle down the drain;

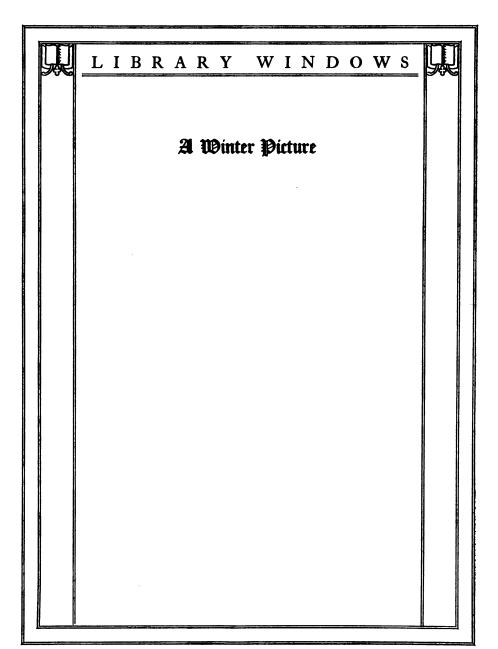
Upon the southern windows raindrops splash

In steely bayonets; to north, a flash Of lightning writes its zigzag on a pane: A rare electric storm has come again Charging all nature with impetuous dash.

How still, in contrast, seems the reference room;

A score of readers here in quiet sit,
Bent o'er their books in attitudes of ease,
Upon no face the slightest touch of gloom:
Not strange the fact, when one considers it,
That even in battle men have felt great
peace.

November the Thirtieth





HITE clouds along the blue horizon fling
A banner of six stripes, while to and fro

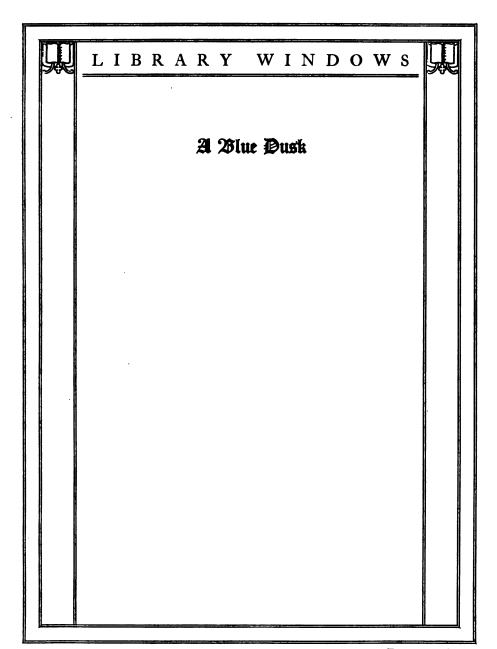
The idle branches sway; a week ago
The last leaf fell, not to be made in spring
The sport of impish buds; quite gently
swing

The lace-embroidered boughs, which lack but snow

To make a winter picture, and bestow Completion on the season's offering: This, through the eastern window; yet to move

A few feet to the left would turn the scene From wintry barrenness to living green; Magnolia and palm stand up to prove Sunshine, instead of snow, to be the fare Accustomed here, although the elms are bare.

December the Sixteenth







OMETIMES a cloudy or a foggy day
Will bring at dusk those blue lights in the sky,

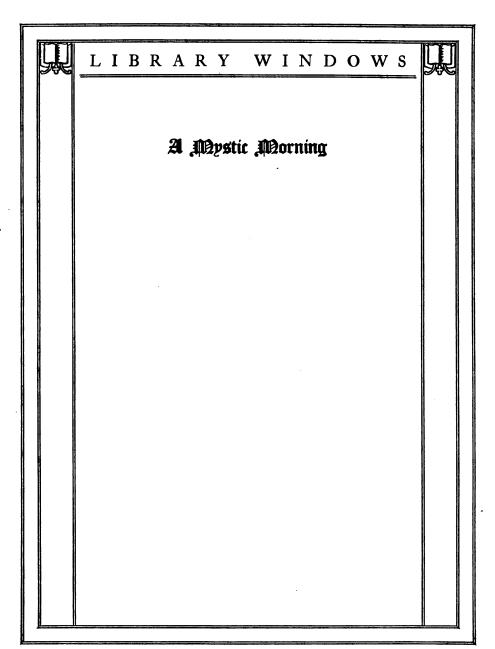
Looking, through windows, as if heaven were nigh;

Although without, the scene is dismal gray:
The cause must be refraction; or the way
The glow from buff electroliers on high
And warm tones of the wall, release the eye
So it seeks out the azure, there to stay.
This is a home for many; gathered here
Are those who eat at restaurants, and sleep,
Perchance, in some cold room devoid of
cheer;

They smile when in this place, though there they weep.

May be in comfort to their bodies given Their souls can catch a nearer view of heaven.

December the Twenty-seventh







HIS morning a white fog envelops all

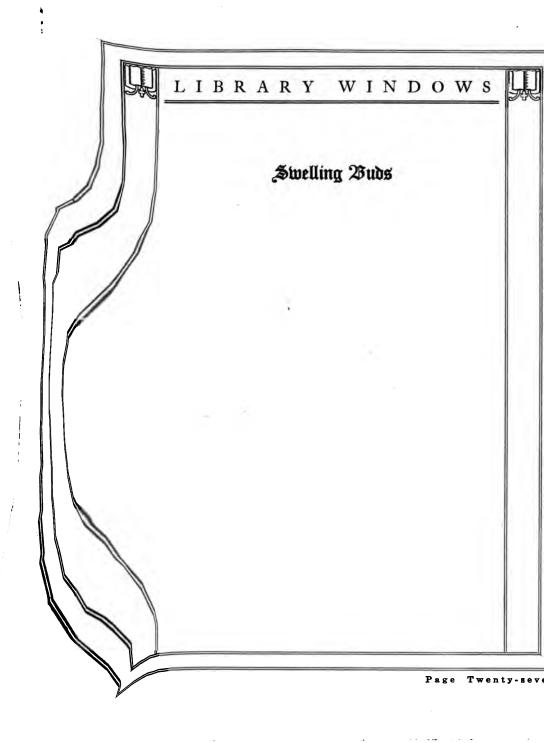
The trees and towers; bedims the gaunt outline

Of Pythian Castle; turns to specter fine The death's-head on that medieval hall, Giving the whole new power to appall; Makes ghostly elms their phantom arms entwine;

Displays, like seaweed floating in the brine, The fan-like tops of trees, remote and tall: So there are authors here with art to throw Illusive vapor 'round events, and show Things weird, which else were simple verity:

Such are a Bulwer-Lytton and a Poe, Who in imagination love to see Familiar things thus wrapped in mystery.

January the Thirteenth







HY be content in sonnets thus to dwell
On views seen through the windows of one room;

Scant patches of blue sky, and trees which loom

Above the sills, softened by buds that swell?

The grass grows out of doors, we know full well,

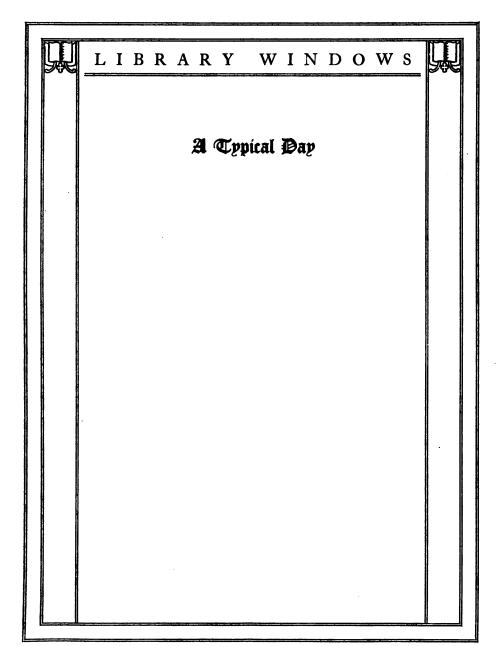
And yellow sunshine all the paths illume; While pussy-willows by the river bloom And bluebird notes the coming spring foretell.

Yet stay! If Helen Keller could but see Against the sky those gently swelling leaves, That early swallow dipping from the eaves, What would she give for such a sight? Shall we

Look with unseeing eyes on signs which bring

Within close range these harbingers of spring?

January the Twenty-fourth







LITTLE haze of fog or smoke or dust,

Though not so much but that the sun shines through;

Gray-rimmed the sky and overhead the blue;

A zephyr neither cold nor warm, but just Refreshed: this types the many days which thrust

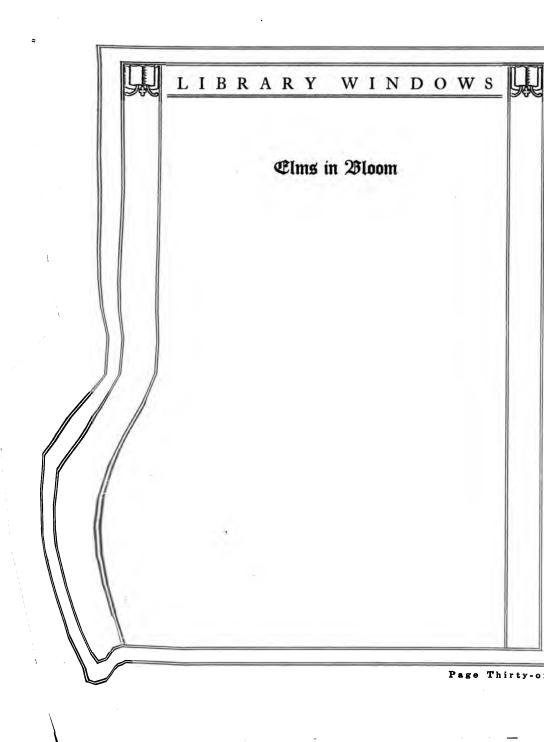
Themselves between extremes, and which but few

Remark. And should it now occur to you To praise the day? "Too nice," the answer of distrust.

And yet, if we but did our part as well
As God does His; if all our common days,
Free from anxiety, were filled with praise
And work:—our faith would all the fear
dispel,

And great accomplishment would enter in To lives now spoiled by fretfulness and sin.

February the Seventh







OR weeks I've tried that purple flush to see
Which writers say o'erspreads the elms in bloom;

But at the best, when sunshine floods the room,

They only seem a reddish brown to me;
I can imagine though, if wholly free
To choose the setting—snow, let us assume,
With neutral sky—the elm trees plume on
plume

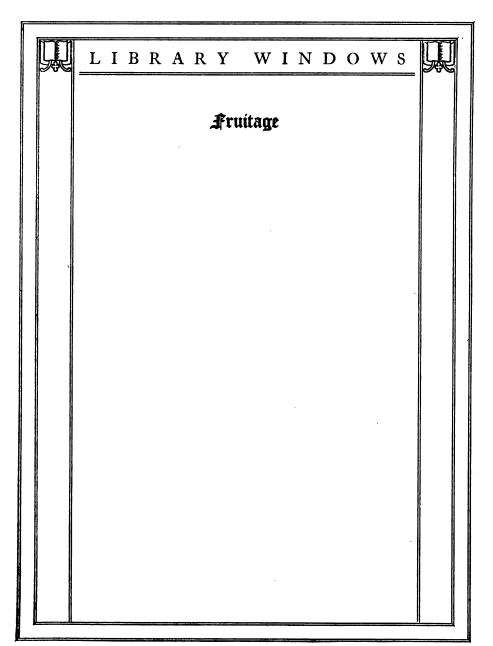
Would glow with color complementary. It may be that the Lord would sometimes

bring

To us a touch of beauty or of grace, Could He detach us from the commonplace Of selfish interests to which we cling; What glory from the Rich Young Man would fall

Had he but answered to the Master's call!

February the Twenty-eighth







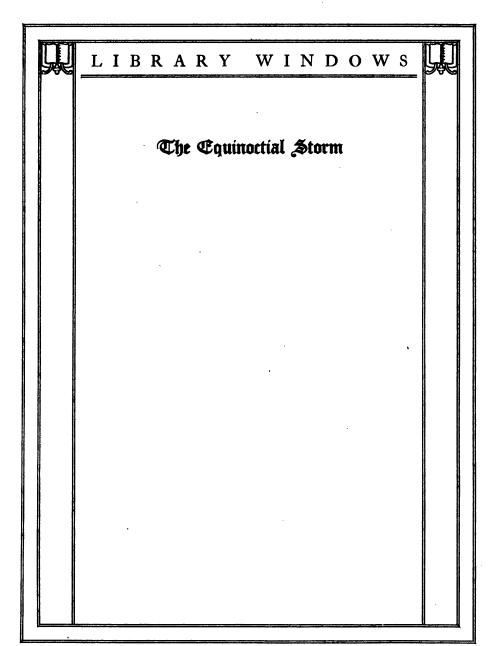
EPARTING clouds have left the sky serene,
And elms so lately clothed in ruddy brown

Have shaken all their blossom-chaff adown Their lichen-covered limbs; the lichen's sheen

Is richly bronze, and of a lustrous green
In harmony, is the samara gown
In which each elm is dressed: Now comes
the crown

Of all the year, the fruit-time long foreseen. The mystery of wedded word and thought Goes on as inconspicuously here
As unseen pollen dust with power fraught Changes the garb of elms year after year:
And as the sun lights up the shining seeds
Occasion will turn words to golden deeds.

March the Tenth







N hour ago the sky was heaven's blue
Though flecked by ambient clouds all silver lined,

But now an azure spot one scarce can find So quickly have the gray clouds driven through

From south to north; from these will brew The equinoctial storm: moisture and wind Are stirring ferment, and their force combined

Will serve to clothe the earth in verdure new.

As suddenly, and o'er a sky as fair,
The war clouds swept the world, with
tumult fraught;

Fierce strugglings, the ferment of unrest, Settling at last to grayness—not despair— For when a vision of the coming day is caught

The purpose of the storm is manifest.

March the Twenty-first

The Factory Fire



OW calm and peaceful seems the sky tonight!

Just so another eve Polaris yearned

From his fixed seat, but eyes that northward turned

Were met with clouds of smoke, and then the light

Of mounting flames, and suddenly a bright And awful burst of licking tongues, discerned

Before the sound was heard of tanks which burned

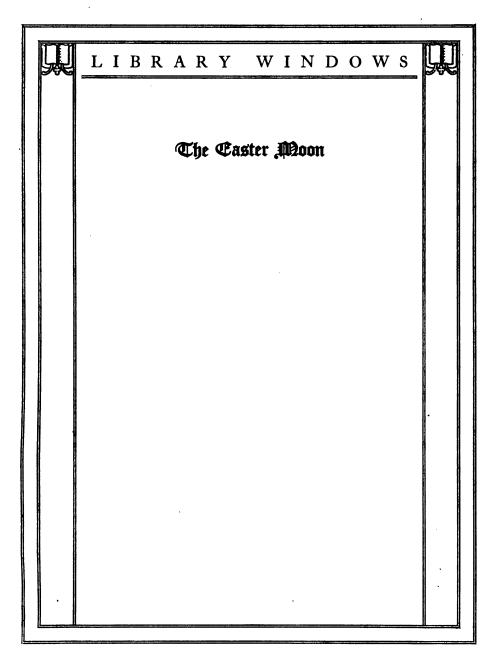
With loud explosion, scattering affright.

Of that great fire the cause is still unknown.

Although a year has passed away since then—

Spontaneous combustion, say some men: It may have been a torch by coward thrown, For so sons of perdition plot to make A hell on earth for their own father's sake.

March the Twenty-seventh.







ISES the moon which brings the Easter nigh!

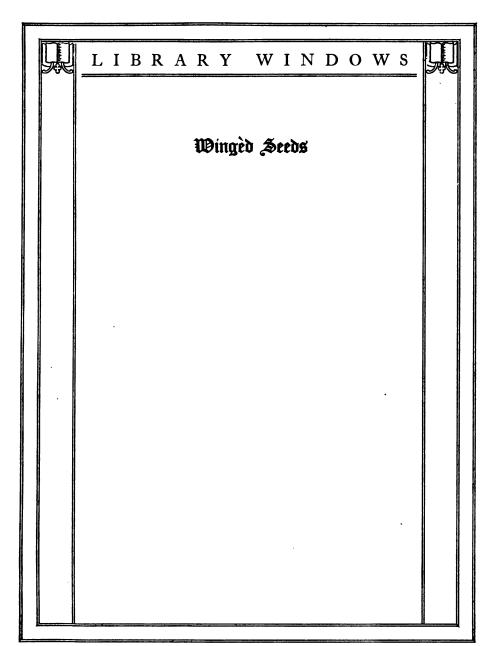
It beams in wondrous beauty as of old

On that still Wednesday—with its tale untold—

In passion week, ere Jesus was to die:
Against the purple background of the sky
The elms appear in drapings manifold;
Their silken seeds, like stitches of dull gold,
Wrought in a web of rich embroidery.
Easter, the ornate season, comes in dress
Of varied hues, a colorful array,
The vesture of the springtime fresh and
gay;

But lilies now the bright blooms dispossess As fitter emblems of the risen Lord; Who shines, like yon fair moon, by earth adored.

March the Thirty-first







F late the air is full of flying things:
Home-making linnets, busy with
romance,

New-risen butterflies that flit and glance, And downy elm seeds trying out their wings;

Quite frequently is heard the whirr which brings

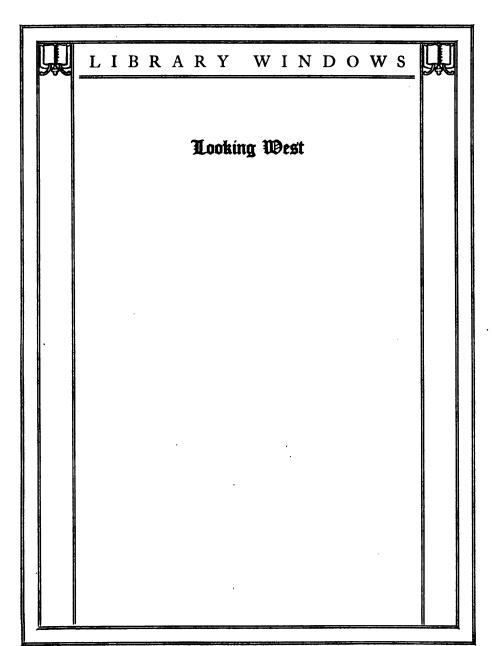
The airplane near, and searching the expanse

From side to side, we note the swift advance

Of man-made bird which through the ether sings:

The task of these has been to practice war From the adjacent camp of Mather Field; But now, most happily, war measures yield To arts of peace, and monster planes fly o'er The land, depositing their human freight And friendly letters; seeds of love for hate.

April the Fourteenth







BECAUSE the earth is round, when one arrives
At utmost western land, the Orient Confronts. View here a scene significant
Through that west window; back of it there thrives

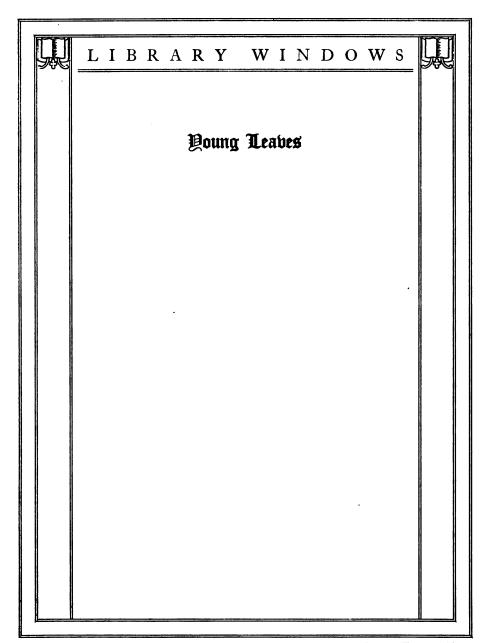
A bright ailanthus tree, an immigrant From the Celestial Empire; all aslant Throughout the undulating limbs there drives

Smoke from a Chinese laundry, which survives

Among the buildings of the civic plant: But, dimly seen as background to the whole, There stands the Labor Temple, firm and strong;

Will it be equal to the task which long Has exercised it, practicing control? A prayer must rise from every sincere heart That labor will with grace perform its part.

April the Twenty-fifth







ROM the main floor no plot of solid ground
Is visible to one who sits or stands
Except in this small office, which commands
A full view of the park; but here abound
People, and lawns, and flowers: 'round and 'round

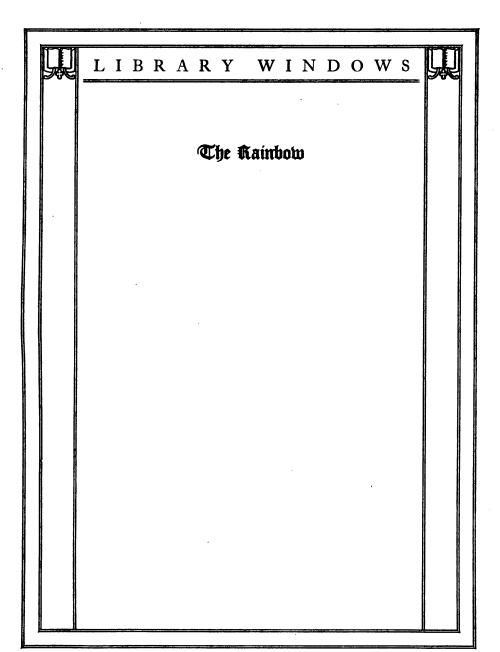
The barefoot children sport in happy bands Beneath the elms, which laugh and clap their hands

So merry do they feel in leaves new-found. There is a time to dance, the Preacher saith, And for these boys and girls the time is ripe; They need no music but the warbler's pipe: For the old men on benches, short of breath,

The time is past; but they have danced and sung

On other May-days when the leaves were young.

May the First







N March, one evening, eyes were raised to scan
The floating clouds which graced the sky, when lo!

Two segments of an iridescent bow Appeared at windows wide apart; their span

Would over-arch the City Hall, whose plan Involves a tower high, with clocks (which go

At intervals). The government below, Commission formed, has been since it began

Somewhat experimental, and this hour It stands in question: will it fade away?

Or will the tried commissioner, returned today

Bring to the whole such harmony and power That like the bow with varied bands in one, 'Twill signalize a brighter time begun?

May the Fifteenth

LIBRARY WINDOWS A Perfect Day





HESE days are all so beautiful, what could
The Heavenly Father do to furnish one

Of such surpassing merit, that when done, It might be called a perfect day? He would Not have to make a bluer sky, nor should The breeze which checks the warm rays of the sun

Be fresher: had the dust which has begun
To dim the luster of the summer wood,
Been by an evening shower washed away,
Then this one might have been a perfect
day.

Last month there were such clean-washed days, with all

The glory of the fleeing cloud, the freshened breeze,

The rich and glossy leafage of the trees; Unlauded they, until beyond recall!

June the Second

LIBRARY WINDOWS June Weather





S though He must have heard the wish of one
Who longed to see a perfect day

It such while present—first of all there

and name

A week of clouds with intermittent sun; And then, before the dullness had begun To be monotonous, a shower; the same A second night; straightway the days became

For half a week all perfect, every one A model of its kind: the first had white And shining clouds which flew like messengers

Across the sky; upon the next all light
And still they hung, as if loath to disperse,
Trying the earth, like Lowell's sky in June;
Today is cloudless, heaven and earth in
tune.

June the Tenth

LIBRARY WINDOWS Summer Clouds





HESE clouds came trooping through the Golden Gate But yesterday, in veils of fog disguised;

And now, like Raphael's angels visualized, They mount and soar, triumphant and elate:

The cirro-cumuli, all animate

Like tumbling cherubs come, well supervised

By stately clouds, with forms etherealized, Who fly like seraphs, watchful and sedate. True ministering angels, they all bear Gifts for the valley in their shining hands, They scatter moisture o'er the thirsty lands, And give a softness to the heated air:

They drop no showers, those rarely come at all

When June is past, till the first rain in fall.

July the Eleventh

LIBRARY WINDOWS Evening Breezes





Of noonday, when humidity hangs low

And trails upon the ground; at evening blow

The breezes from the south, fresh and replete

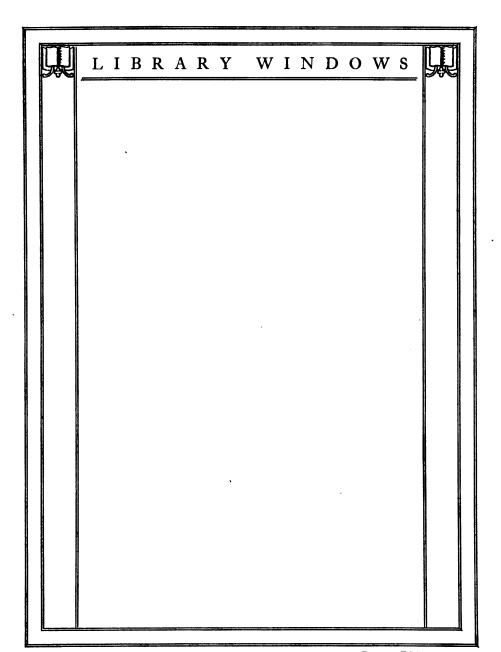
With cooling powers; they change the air effete

Which gathers where the people come and go

Or sit and read; new vigor they bestow,
With promise of a night's repose complete:
This ebb and flow of atmospheric tides
Between our inland valley and the sea,
Functions with pleasing regularity
O'er waterways where the Coast Range
divides:

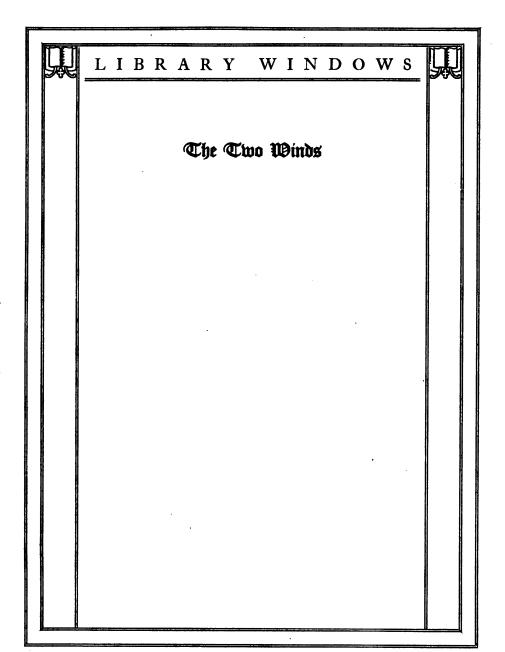
And when the heat of noontide ebbs away, Sea breezes through the open windows play.

July the Twenty-fifth





Page Fifty-eight



Page Fifty-nine





UR South Wind is a buxom matron, young
And full of hope; the rain is in her hair,

And from her arms blessings beyond compare

Over expectant hills and vales are flung:

The wild locks of the North Wind have been wrung

Free from all moisture; she is old and spare, Hungry and peevish from exposure where She climbed the Siskiyous, on border hung. When South Wind lays her cheek against the pane

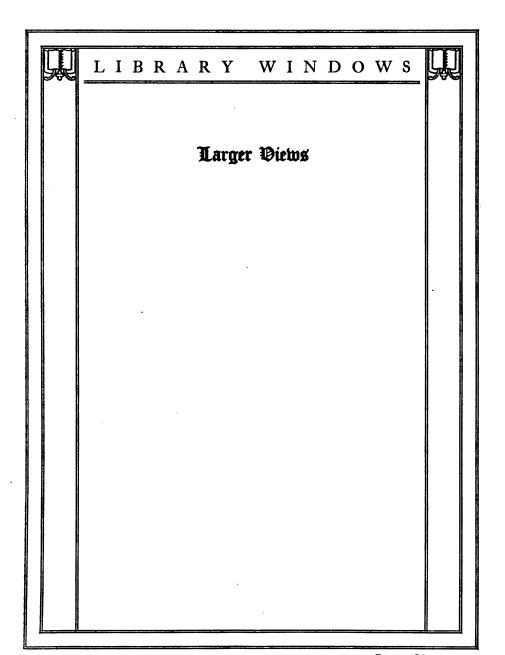
The boughs out yonder swing a deep byelow:

But when wind from the north begins to blow,

And scratch with sandy fingers, and complain,

The branches seem all withered and inane; The old witch from the north torments them so.

August the Fifth







ITH eyes just lightly closed, but vision clear
Directed through the windows of the soul,

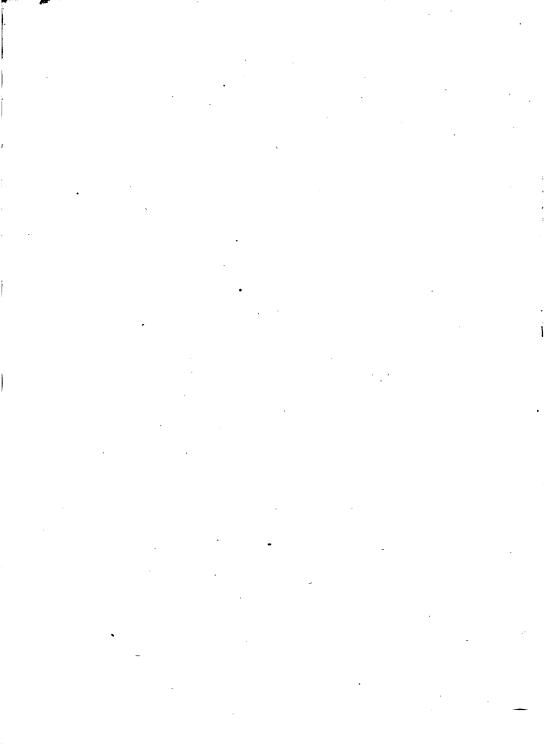
Vacation pictures which embrace the whole Of California's length and breadth appear: The snow-crowned Shasta, lone, but unaustere;

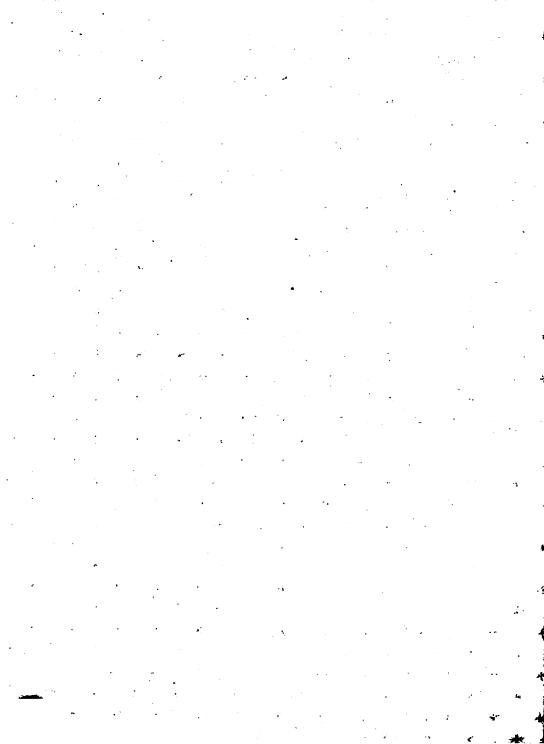
Jewelled Tahoe, sparkling in ample bowl; Fair Tissaack in rosy aureole, And twinkling cities from Mount Lowe so sheer:

The creeping waves on Coronado's sand,
And breakers on the coast of Monterey;
The crimson clouds of San Francisco Bay.
Rare panorama of our sunset land!
What blame if, from the glimmer of the heat,

One's eyes are closed for visions fresh, though fleet?

August the Twelfth







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